

## Honorary Awards and Informal Recognition Awards

This is the third article in a series describing various types of awards available to Federal employees. Honorary and informal recognition awards are addressed and explained. Articles 1 and 2 posted on the OHCM Awards Web site (<http://ohcm.larc.nasa.gov/benefits/awards/>) address Performance Awards, Quality Step Increase awards, Superior Accomplishment Awards, and Time-Off Awards.

**Honorary awards** are generally symbolic and usually do not use *monetary* recognition at all.

They are a gesture of respect given to employees to recognize their performance and value to the organization. Many agencies include this traditional form of high-level, formal recognition as part of their overall incentive awards programs. In general, these are often items such as trophies, framed certificates, medals, and plaques.

Honorary non-monetary awards must meet the following criteria:

- The item must be something that the recipient could reasonably be expected to value, but not something that conveys a sense of monetary value.
- The item must have a lasting trophy value;
- The item must clearly symbolize the employer-employee relationship in some fashion; and,
- The item must take an appropriate form to be used in the public sector and to be purchased with public funds.

An example of honorary awards would be the medals and framed certificates given to employees for the Agency Honor Awards or medallion and certificate given for the LaRC Director's Award. These medals and awards convey a sense of monetary and lasting value, clearly symbolize the employer-employee relationship, and are something that could be expected to be used in the public sector and purchased with public funds.

**Informal recognition awards** are a type of award that may be given to reward performance that otherwise might not merit an award such as cash, time-off, or an honorary award. Agencies use these awards to provide more frequent and timely informal recognition to employees.

Informal recognition awards must meet the following criteria:

- The item must be of nominal value, and
- The item must take an appropriate form to be used in the public sector and to be purchased with public funds.

Items such as certificates, cup holders, pens, mugs, or other small items of nominal value may be given as informal recognition items. For example, cup holders or other small items used in acknowledging an employee's suggestion or idea under the Center's Employee Suggestion Program or certificates and pins used to recognize employees' years of Federal service.

To find out more information about awards, you may contact the Awards Office in the Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) at extension 43194 and go to the following NASA and LaRC Awards Policy documents and websites:

- NPR 3451.1B, NASA Awards and Recognition Program Requirements;
- LPR 3451.1 Incentive Awards and Recognition Program;
- NPR 3430.1C, Employee Performance Communication System
- Center's OHCM Web site at: <http://ohcm.larc.nasa.gov/benefits/awards/>
- Agency's NASApeople Web site at:  
[http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/awards/external\\_awards.htm](http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/awards/external_awards.htm)
- Human Resources Portal at:  
[https://hr.nasa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/policies\\_and\\_programs/233/awards/12990](https://hr.nasa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/policies_and_programs/233/awards/12990)